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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/834,085	04/11/2001	Yasuhiro Nishiyama	9281-3943	2759
75	590 01/10/2003			
Brinks Hofer Gilson & Lione			EXAMINER	
P.O. Box 10395 Chicago, IL 60610			KLIMOWICZ, WILLIAM JOSEPH	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
		2652		
		DATE MAILED: 01/10/2003		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

•		Application No.	Арр	olicant(s)				
	•	09/834,085	NIS	NISHIYAMA ET AL.				
	Office Action Summary	Examiner	Art	Unit				
		William J. Klimov	vicz 265	2 /				
The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address Period for Reply								
THE I - Exter after - If the - If NO - Failu - Any r	ORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPL MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION. Issions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1. SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication. Period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a repperiod for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period reto reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statutely received by the Office later than three months after the mailing dispatent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).	136(a). In no event, howenty within the statutory mir will apply and will expire e, cause the application to	over, may a reply be timely file imum of thirty (30) days will b SIX (6) MONTHS from the ma b become ABANDONED (35 to	d e considered timely. illing date of this communication. U.S.C. § 133).				
1)⊠	Responsive to communication(s) filed on <u>09</u>	December 2002 .						
2a) <u></u> □	This action is FINAL . 2b)⊠ T	his action is non-fi	nal.					
3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under <i>Ex parte Quayle</i> , 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213. Disposition of Claims								
4)⊠	Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application	n.						
	4a) Of the above claim(s) 6,7 and 13-20 is/are withdrawn from consideration.							
5))☐ Claim(s) is/are allowed.							
6)🖂	☑ Claim(s) <u>1-5 and 8-12</u> is/are rejected.							
7)								
8)□	8) Claim(s) are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.							
Application Papers								
9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.								
10)⊠ The drawing(s) filed on <u>11 April 2001</u> is/are: a)⊠ accepted or b)□ objected to by the Examiner.								
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).								
11)☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on is: a)☐ approved b)☐ disapproved by the Examiner.								
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.								
12)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.								
Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120								
13)⊠ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).								
a)⊠ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:								
	1.⊠ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.							
	2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No							
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)). * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received. 								
14) 🗌 A	cknowledgment is made of a claim for domes	tic priority under 3	5 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to	a provisional application).				
) ☐ The translation of the foreign language pr Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domes							
Attachmen	i(s)							
2) 🔲 Notic	e of References Cited (PTO-892) e of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) nation Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 2	4)	Interview Summary (PTC Notice of Informal Patent Other:	0-413) Paper No(s) Application (PTO-152)				
U.S. Patent and To PTO-326 (Re		Action Summary		Part of Paper No. 9				

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DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Claims 6, 7 and 13-20 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a nonelected invention, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Election was made without traverse in Paper No. 8 (filed December 9, 2002).

It is noted that the Applicants elected Group II (Claims 1-14) and Specie I (Thin Film Magnetic Head having a SiON gap layer).

The Applicants contend that claims 1-12 correspond to such a Specie. This is incorrect. Claims 1-5 and 8-12 correspond to the elected Specie. Claims 6 and 7 are drawn to a thin film magnetic head with a SiO2 gap layer. Thus, only claims 1-5 and 8-12 have been examined on the merits.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless -

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 8, 9 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Chang et al. (US 5,719,730).

As per claim 1, Chang et al. (US 5,719,730) discloses a thin film magnetic head (FIGS. 1-5) comprising: an insulating gap layer (e.g., 18) provided between cores (16, 18) made of a magnetic material; and a coil for inducing a recording magnetic field in the cores (16, 18) (e.g.,

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see COL. 6, lines 10-21), wherein the gap layer (18) comprises a SiON film (e.g., see COL. 5, lines 22-30 in conjunction with COL. 6, lines 52-59).

As per claims 2 and 9, wherein the Young's modulus E of the gap layer (18) is inherently seen to be E > 123.2 (GPa) and ≥ 127.4 (Gpa) as per claims 4 and 11. This inherency is based on the material of the gap layer (18), which is disclosed as silicon oxynitride (SiON).

As per claim 8, Chang et al. (US 5,719,730) further discloses a magnetoresistive element (12) capable of detecting a recording signal due to a change in electric resistance with an external magnetic field; and shield layers (10, 16) formed above and below the magnetoresistive element (12) with gap layers provided therebetween (lower gap layer of (14) is formed prior to deposition of MR sensor (12) and upper gap layer of (14) is deposited over the MR sensor after formation of the MR sensor), wherein at least one of the gap layers (14) comprises a SiON film. See COL. 5, lines 11-30.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 3, 5, 10 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chang et al. (US 5,719,730).

With regard to claims 3, 5, 10 and 12, although Chang et al. (US 5,719,730) remains silent with respect to the specific concentration of nitrogen within the silicon oxynitride gap layer

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(18), it is notoriously old and well known in the magnetic head art to routinely modify a magnetic head gap layer composition in the course of routine optimization/experimentation and thereby obtain various standard optimized relationships including those set forth in claims 3, 5, 10 and 12.

It would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have had the magnetic head of Chang et al. (US 5,719,730) satisfy the relationships set forth in claims 3, 5, 10 and 12 as it pertains to the atomic concentration of nitrogen within the disclosed SiON gap layer.

The rationale is as follows: one of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to have had the magnetic head of Chang et al. (US 5,719,730) satisfy the relationships set forth in claims 3, 5, 10 and 12 as it pertains to the atomic concentration of nitrogen within the disclosed SiON gap layer, since it is notoriously old and well known in the magnetic head art to routinely modify a the atomic composition percentage of a disclosed gap layer in the course of routine optimization /experimentation and thereby obtain various standard optimized relationships (such as resistivity of gap layer to reduce electrical shortings, strength and/or hardness of gap layer, smoothness of gap layer, etc. which within the general knowledge of the art, are factors that are recognized as result-effective variables) including those set forth in claims 3, 5, 10 and 12.

Moreover, absent a showing of criticality (i.e., unobvious or unexpected results), the relationships set forth in claims 3, 5, 10 and 12 are considered to be within the level of ordinary skill in the art.

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Additionally, the law is replete with cases in which when the mere difference between the claimed invention and the prior art is some range, variable or other dimensional limitation within the claims, patentability cannot be found.

It furthermore has been held in such a situation, the Applicant must show that the particular range is critical, generally by showing that the claimed range achieves unexpected results relative to the prior art range. *In re Woodruff*, 919 F.2d 1575, 1578, 16 USPQ2d 1934, 1936 (Fed. Cir. 1990).

Moreover, the instant disclosure does not set forth evidence ascribing unexpected results due to the claimed dimensions. See *Gardner v. TEC Systems, Inc.*, 725 F.2d 1338 (Fed. Cir. 1984), which held that the dimensional limitations failed to point out a feature which performed and operated any differently from the prior art.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to William J. Klimowicz whose telephone number is (703) 305-3452. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday (6:30AM-5:00PM).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Hoa T. Nguyen can be reached on (703) 305-9687. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 872-9314 for regular communications and (703) 872-9314 for After Final communications.

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Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 305-4700.

William J. Klimowicz Primary Examiner Art Unit 2652

WJK January 9, 2003